

Stupid Should Hurt

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Summary: Lazarus Cayde, reflecting on the differences between civilian and military life, from his standpoint as both an anarchist against and a soldier for the UNSC.

Stupid Should Hurt

Y'know, there hasn't been a time in my life here there hasn't been war.

>Sad part is, I guess, it's all been the same goddamned war.
When I was a kid, we'd sit in classes, listening to the news, streaming video to laptops, watching it on holotanks. I'd go home and my uncle would be watching it, or reading aloud some article in the newspaper to me, about this or that engagement and how the theatre of combat in such-and-such system was now unwinnable. All that bullshit.

>It startles me, in the end, to remember howâ€¦| unreal it all felt.
Back home, the war was so far away.

>Back home, the war was something we heard about, and everybody expressed their plastic patriotism, saccharine support for troops from planets whose names we'd never heard of before, and whose names would fade into obscurity, out of mind and forgotten, when it came to the question of what fast-food joint we'd eat at, where we'd buy gas for the car today, what movie we were going to see, how big Becky's ass looked in that skirt today, and whether or not that skanky slutty secretary at Hubby's office was trying to steal somebody's husband.
All in all, it feels strange to look back on it, and realize that the people back home think of the war, in general, with the same amount of concern that they'd devote to the plotline and character development of some cookie-cutter sitcom.

>I used to be the same way.
Except my passions were more along the let's-rabble-rouse-and-change-the-world path. Like the "hey, lets do whatever we have to, to cause havoc and mayhem!" type path.

>Looking back on it, I used to think I was going to change the world. That I was single-handedly going to topple the United Nations and reform our political structure and society. I used to think that maybe, there was a better way to go about the whole war effort. Fuck,

I used to say, "Throw the fucking SPARTANs out there to end this before we have a fucking draft! Not another Nam!" Like I knew anything about it. Not another Nam, that was a real classy thing to say, in the social circles I used to run with.
Looking back on it, I realize how much of a fucking kid I was.

>So I made some mistakes, and landed myself here.
And it's a whole different world out here.

>Back home, we used to hear "collateral damage" and "died a hero saving his unit" and "valiantly gave their lives for the war effort". Flash a picture of an artistically dead soldier, being carried by grim-faced fellows, fire in their eyes saying that they'll make the enemy pay for taking their blood-brother from them. How an injured soldier saved his entire unit by making a last ditch attempt to stall the Covenantâ€|
Here, it's more like, "Fuckit, better you than me pal." Its more like, "FUCK, I didn't know the human body could bleed that much and survive!" Its more like, "Holy shit, plasma doesn't do that on TV!"

>Its more like, "I never knew that burning flesh smelled like that."
Its more like, "Why's my arm lying on the ground beside me?"

>There is nothing artistic about war. And all those pictures of the units that tug at your heartstrings? Yeah, those are posed. Those are arranged. Fuck, I wonder how the hell they get some of those pictures, who they pay to doctor them up and how that motherfucker sleeps at night.
First time I saw a guy in my unit bite it, I threw up all over my boots. Barely managed to get my helmet off before I did it. I was puking, and crying, and in between breaths I was praying to God I got off planet alive. One guy pissed himself. And another guy, because he couldn't take the heat, blew his brains out as soon as we got back on board the ship.

>I watch news feeds, sometimes â€" stream them from my computer, just like I did when I was a kid in school.
I see these bright eyed young guys, OCS 90-day wonders. They rave on and on, about how well we're doing, how we expect to be routing the Covenant any day now. How enlisted casualties are at an all-time minimum, and that the stories families have been leaking, of never getting a body returned home, are all anti-UN propaganda.

>I wonder how much they paid those actors to dress up in uniforms and say all that shit. Propaganda annoys me even more now that I'm in the service.
The other day, I had to leave two of my boys on planet. I had to leave them behind to die, because the Covenant started glassing the surface, we had to bail out, and their asses got lost en route back to the LZ.

>It was them or us.
Needless to say, their families aren't getting bodies back. Hell, in all the time I've been in the service, I think I've attended somewhere around ninety-six funerals.

>I think at four, we had the body.
Today, on this editorial-type show, where people can voice their opinions, I streamed the episode, and I still haven't been able to make it all the way through.

>I see these fucking civilians on the show, talking, running their mouths about the war. It was this whole point-counter-point thing.
They had these pro-war activists there. I can't remember their names.

>But the anti-war activists, one of the guysâ€| his name was Lance Simonson.
Lance Simonson used to arrange Anarchist rallies. Used to always be at my heels to do this speech or that, or just to show up and endorse him. A real fuckin leech, who never understood what it meant to really fight for a cause.

>He sat up there, and argued against the war. For this reason or that reasonâ€| I can't even remember exactly why.
And the pro-war guy

wasn't any better. When responding to soldier reports of needless cruelty in the services, to complaints that their tour of duty was being extended due to "stop-loss" (it's the nice way to replace a draft), to not being allowed home to see their families, to being treated as if they were expendableâ€¦ He cited media sources that paint the war to be a total cake walk.
>â€¦ Stupid should hurt.<p>

End
file.